

Minutes, Fifth Massachusetts Food Policy Council Meeting  
March 9, 2012  
Brigham Community Farm, Grafton

In attendance:

John Auerbach, Commissioner, MA Department of Public Health  
Cheryl Bartlett, MA Department of Public Health  
Kerry Bowie, designee for Deputy Commissioner Gary Moran, MA Depart of Environmental Protection  
Jeff Cole, MA Farmers Markets,  
Manny Costa, Costa Fruit and Produce  
Helen Caulton-Harris, Springfield Board of Health  
Commissioner Daniel Curley, Commissioner, MA Depart of MA Transitional Assistance  
Representative Steve Kulik  
John Lee, Allandale Farm  
Frank Martinez Nocito, designee for Commissioner Daniel Curley, MA Depart of Transitional Assistance  
Katie Millet, MA Department of Education  
Cheryl Bartlett, MDPH

**Introductions and Welcome:** The meeting was called to order at 9:40 AM by the Vice-Chair Representative Kulik. After members and attendees introduced themselves, the order of the agenda was altered by Representative Kulik who introduced Kristin Bafaro, Executive Director, Community Harvest Project, Inc. and Brigham Hill Community Farm, who shared an overview of their programs. The focus on increasing access to produce which is distributed by the Worcester County Food Bank, and to building an engaged community with volunteer opportunities (over 7,000 last year). The Community Harvest Project's goal is to be a part of the solution to hunger in Worcester County, through 260,000 pounds of produce donated and a new project to evaluate the volunteer and nutritional impact.

### **1. Reading and approval of minutes**

***A motion was made by Commissioner John Auerbach and seconded by Katie Millet to approve the minutes from the last meeting as presented. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.***

### **2. Reports of Officers**

- a. Chair and Vice Chair: Acting Chair Representative Kulik shared an update that Commissioner Soares will be leaving MDAR and moving on to a position with the Cranberry Marketing Committee effective July 1, 2012. Representative Kulik read a statement from Commissioner Soares about the difficulty with his decision as well as his expectations that all stakeholders will continue their dedication to the FPC objectives. Representative Kulik acknowledged Commissioner's Soares steadfast leadership to the FPC.
- b. Secretary- No report beyond previous minutes

### **3. Reports of Standing Committees**

- a. Advisory Committee
- b. Bylaws Committee
- c. Nominating Committee – Recommendations for FPC Advisory Committee

Representative Kulik, chair of the FPC Advisory Committee described the nomination process outlined in previous council meetings. All those who were nominated and had expressed interest to be on the Advisory Committee were contacted. A conference call that included Frank Carlson, Cheryl Bartlett for Commissioner Auerbach, Frank Martinez Nocito for Commissioner Curley and Manny Costa was held. The resulting nominees (listed below) were announced by Representative Kulik.

Helen Caulton- Harris asked about the statewide distribution of nominees across the state. Katie Bishop reviewed the locations of the nominees with about half from eastern MA and half from western MA as well as some working with groups that are state-wide. Katie Millet noted that there may be times when the advisory committee or Council will need information or support from additional individuals with specific expertise.

***The Council agreed by consensus that the by-laws allow and that the Council will include other individuals on the advisory committee as expertise is needed.***

***A motion to approve the slate as presented was made by John Lee and seconded by Commissioner Auerbach. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.***

The Advisory Committee's first assignment will be to review the Grocery Task Force Recommendations and report back to the FPC at the June meeting.

***It was agreed by consensus that the Advisory Committee will organize and meet as they determine is needed.***

3/9/2012 list of the Food Policy Council Advisory Committee:

#### **Farmland Protection**

*Cris Coffin* of American Farmland Trust

#### **Farm Business, Urban & CSA, Community Gardening, Immigrant & Refugee Farming or Youth Education through Ag**

*Shemariah Blum-Evitts* of Lutheran Social Services' New Lands Farm Program

*John Wang* of The Food Project

#### **UMASS Extension**

*Amanda Kinchla* of UMASS Extension, UMASS Amherst

#### **Food Distribution, Processing and Marketing**

*Phil Korman* of Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture

#### **School of Nutrition or Public Health**

*Christina Economos* of Tufts University

#### **Community-Based Coalition or Health Care Provider Addressing Obesity and Chronic Disease**

Nancy Cohen of UMass

**Transitional Assistance or Anti-Hunger Group**

Ellen Parker of Project Bread

**Active Farmers or Farmer Association Representatives**

Brad Mitchell of Farm Bureau, nominated by Farm Bureau and MA Food Policy Alliance

Winton Pitcoff Maple Producers, Dairy Farmers, NOFA, nominated by NOFA

**4. Reports of Special Committees**

Jeff Cole suggested a Special Committee be organized to coordinate FPC participation in Agriculture Day at the State House on April 3, which he offers to head. There will be a 6 foot table at the event at the Grand Staircase location, since only groups with food samples will be in the Great Hall.

Commissioner Auerbach asked for more details and Jeff generally described the event, that is organized by the MA Agricultural Promotional Board with leadership from Farm Bureau and support from MDAR. The event starts with a legislative background from Farm Bureau, based on a consensus white paper with universal priorities on one side. Industry specific issues from each group may be added on the other side. This year there will be a legislator only foods preview/tasting, with no more than 2 representatives from each participating commodity before being opened to all attendees. Food preparation this year is being coordinated by the Worcester Vocational School.

John Lee suggested that FPC attendees complement the White Paper priorities with FPC priorities and meet with legislators, especially those who may be less knowledgeable about the value of agriculture in the state and the important impact on the state's economy, as well as food and nutrition.

***It was agreed by consensus that The FPC will pull together key points that this board would like to make to legislators.***

Commissioner Curley identified food access and what it means to people in MA as one point and mentioned that about 1 in 8 people in the Commonwealth access DTA services. It's important to educate legislators and others about the relationship between DAT/SNAP and local food, which happens through many different venues. All of these relationships are critical to emphasize, considering the current focus on looking at fraud and misuse of programs. The ag economic impact is important because in addition, \$2 is spent in the local economy for every SNAP dollar spent on food. DTA work also has an impact with the school lunch program - so data is being shared between agencies. A number of legislators are looking for more information on this topic because of the stigma that surrounds food access. Recipients often have to deal with the stigma of using the program.

Representative Kulik suggested that each agency have literature about the programs they operate where relevant to FPC priorities. These can be featured at the FPC table - as well as FPC highlights around FPC issues. He noted that this is a good opportunity to introduce his colleagues to the FPC and that urban legislators are now as engaged as rural legislators - relating current ag connections with inner city issues. Agricultural land Preservation is also a priority.

***The Council affirmed Representative Kulik's note that considering the change in staff at MDAR, and it being the smallest of the EEA agencies, strong support of MDAR by the FPC is important.***

Commissioner Auerbach described the WIC program, which is used by 40% of mothers in MA who have recently given birth, and has the potential to be more strongly linked with agriculture. He stated The Ag in Motion program is also closely aligned with agriculture in the state and issues around poultry processing are also worth mentioning on Ag Day.

Jeff noted that if the FPC agrees he will seek to place organizations that are part of the FPC in close proximity to each other in order to facilitate FPC representation. He will share the layout with the group.

Helen Caulton-Harris wants to be sure that the culture of the economic impact of SNAP and WIC is emphasized as programs that support the work force and have a relationship to agriculture.

Jeff Cole seeks to talk about food access, health benefits and the impact on health care costs of local produce, and the correlation between farmers markets and increased fresh produce consumption.

Helen Caulton-Harris shared that individual stories can be impactful, when data is not available.

Katie Millet will bring a brochure in English and Spanish that described many of the programs with collaborative programs. Representative Kulik asked for FPC members to leave materials with Katie for the FPC table.

## **5. Special Orders –No action required**

## **6. Unfinished Business and General Orders**

- Massachusetts Grocery Access Task Force Summary Recommendations will be reviewed by newly formed Advisory Committee for the June meeting
- Matrix update/reminder, please fill it out!
- Chop Chop Magazine [www.chopchopmag.org](http://www.chopchopmag.org) free monthly newsletter  
[www.mass.gov/massinmotion/chopchop](http://www.mass.gov/massinmotion/chopchop) was described by Cheryl Bartlett.

## **7. New Business**

Representative Kulik confirmed the locations for upcoming FPC meetings scheduled from – 9:30 – 12:30 as follows, and invited suggestions for future meeting locations:

- June 1 – Union Train Station, Union Hall, Worcester, Union Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor
- September 7 , DCR Farm in Canton
- December 7, The Trustees of Res<sup>er</sup>vations' Doyle Community Park & Center, Leominster
- March 1, Farm Bureau, Marlborough - tentative

An intern from Tufts University has been identified for the FPC Advisory Committee. Representative Kulik asked members to share any relevant projects.

## **8. Program**

Lisa Burnett RD, LDN, SNS, Director, Nutrition & School Programs, New England Dairy & Food Council, shared an overview of Fuel up to Fitness and talked about how people want to know the 159 dairy farmers in Massachusetts, as well as successes with the dairy farmer support program.

Frank Martinez Nocito, DTA, provided an update on Healthy Incentives Pilot as related to FPC objectives. The pilot will investigate if a monetary incentive for purchasing fruits and vegetables will affect spending habits, knowing that an increase in consumption of produce will decrease disease risk. The pilot launched on November 1 with 7,500 HIP households in three waves of 2,500. All households are on board and data is being collected but not ready to be shared. There were over 140 trainings to households, and 91 retailers involved including Walmart, Story N Shop, Price Rite and Cumberland Farms, in addition to bodegas and small retail stores. Additional retailers are being engaged including Big Y. There will be up to 12 farmers markets participating this spring in three models for an additional access point through the growing season. DTA is getting very positive feedback from clients.

Helen Caulton-Harris added that a community garden ordinance in Springfield and other work compliments the HIP program.

Katie Millet asked about the expansion from 91 to 130 retailers and how it happened.

Stephanie Brown talked about working with large retailers so that they could make system changes and an on-the-ground contactor who coordinated participation with smaller retailers through grass roots efforts.

Commissioner John Auerbach noted that a database based on body mass index and the other data exists. It is based on a random phone interview and questions about consumption of fresh produce each day. He indicated that it might be helpful.

Jeff Cole talked about the importance of this project.

Frank Martinez Nocito graciously noted all the community based partners who are critical to success.

Commissioner Curley noted that efforts will focus on using tools to take advantage of technology.

## **9. Good of the Order**

### **a. Member Announcements**

MA Farm to School Conference, March 15<sup>th</sup>, Old Sturbridge Village, [www.massfarmtoschool.org/convention.htm](http://www.massfarmtoschool.org/convention.htm)

### **b. Member Observations or points of discussion relevant to the work of the Council**

Cheryl Bartlett, Mass in Motion, has had PR events across the state to build awareness and outreach of DPH programs in Somerville and Holyoke. Action Institutes have been hosted across the state with over 300 participants from over 300 community teams. Initiative is to take evidence based programs and best bring them to local communities. Examples are: Corner store initiatives, Healthy restaurant initiatives and some awards, implementing school nutrition program in schools across the state, working with food

pantries, sodium awareness initiatives, and Chop Chop magazine seeking to get families thinking about healthy cooking at home.

Kerry Bowie from DEP introduced himself. He described a focus on anaerobic digesters for farms, composting and other issues including watersheds and mobile slaughter facility issues. He deals with air, water and land which are critical resources for food production. He also works with environmental justice issues.

Katie Millet provided an update on current initiatives including working with DPH on state nutrition standards and the acceptable food list, available on the internet. The new pattern on the federal side requires more vegetables to be counted as a reimbursable meal. In low access areas, those with 50% eligibility for free and reduced meals can join a program allowing \$3 per student for schools to increase produce in the meal. Expect an increase in school numbers in the program next year. There have been a few school principals who have expanded the program at their own cost due to the positive effects reported. Katie also reported strong positive results from the Farm to School Conference.

Representative Kulik described a potential 1/3 reduction in funding. Reviewing state resources to bring to the table for communities that are much stressed, he stated the need for concerted information sharing about who uses the benefits and how to address the stigma issue.

Helen Caulton-Harris suggested that a future FPC meeting might address Elder Services not being able to cook foods with local produce.

Manny Costa suggested that a future topic could address access to land for production is an important issue as well as true food costs, and urban land use. Another topic might be how increasing local demand for food and how it affects job growth and training that is needed for school cafeteria workers.

**c.Public Access: Public comment was accepted throughout the meeting**

A motion to **adjourn** was made by Jeff Cole , seconded by Manny Costa, and unanimously passed at 12:31 pm.